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The CEA CRITIC

Formerly THE NEWS LETTER of the College English Association

Vol. XI—No. 3 Published Mineola, N. Y. Editorial Office, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn 10, N. Y. March, 1949

"For Appetitive Shock"

Dear Editor:

As one of the few nonprofessional members of CEA, and a faithful reader of our admirable bulletin (under whatever title) let me appeal to you.

Doubleday and Company plan to distribute, in April, some advance copies for the Trade, complimentary of course, of a weird novel of mine. But since the hero (if any) of my sombre fable is either the two-volume Oxford Dictionary, or the ghost of Chaucer, or a frustrated Teacher of English from Wisconsin—I wouldn't myself know which or whom—the astute publishers asked me to send them a list of a few "English" teachers who would find equal pang and pleasure in such a book.

I could think of no method of choice except the CEA, and Messrs. Doubleday replied that they would be happy to send, **to the first fifty members of CEA who request it,** an advance copy for appetitive shock. These will be privileged and personal copies, two months ahead of publication. I know no way to spread this on the blackboard except by saying that the first 50 of our members who write (postcard will do) to MISS LOUISE THOMAS, Doubleday & Co., 14 West 49, New York 20, can receive (free, gratis and for meditation) a copy of the book. I don't mention the title as I'm not trying to advertize.

Yrs, dear sir,
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

No doubt, Doubleday & Co., 14 W. 49, N. Y. 20, would like to receive candid reports from members who have meditated. The Editor of the CRITIC would enjoy seeing carbons of same candid reports.

New England Meeting

The Program Committee reports much progress in arrangements for the Spring Conference of the New England region of the College English Association, to be held May 7, 1949 at the University of Massachusetts, in Amherst.

The opening session will begin at 10 o'clock, in the Auditorium of the Old Chapel; and the conference will probably conclude with a short evening session, at the Jones Library, at which memoral appreciations of Theodore Spencer and Elizabeth Manwaring will be presented. There will be an informal dinner at The Lord Jeffery Inn.

Opportunity will be provided for visits to places connected with authors who have lived in Amherst, and for viewing literary exhibits at the Jones Library.

The weekend of May 7 will be crowded for the town of Amherst, and reservations will be difficult, but Prof. Leonta Horrigan and Mr. Robert Lane will try to find accommodations for those who request them early.

Among the key participants are the following: Ernest Bernbaum, Kenneth Burke (Bennington College and Institute for Advanced Studies), Reginald Cook (Director, Bread Loaf School), Wilbert Snow (Wesleyan University), Rene Wellek (Yale University). and George F. Whicher (Amherst College).

Members of the Committee on Program include: Daniel Aaron (Smith College), C. E. Barber (Amherst College), Maxwell H. Goldberg (University of Massachusetts), Chairman; Alan McGee (Mount Holyoke College), Alvan Ryan (University of Massachusetts at Fort Devens).

Middle Atlantic Meeting

The Middle Atlantic Group will hold its Spring Meeting at College Park, Maryland on April 23rd. The morning session, which will begin at 11 o'clock, will present a discussion of seminar courses for English majors in the upper-class years. Speakers: Father Rooney, Catholic Univ.: Geo. Winchester, George Washington Univ. Luncheon ($1.60) will be followed by an address by Leonie Adams, poetry consultant, Library of Congress.

Notices will be sent to all those who have attended the group's meetings, but it is hoped that additional names of interested teachers will be sent to the secretary, Calvin O. Linton, at George Washington University, Washington, D. C., or to the president of the Group, T. F. Marshall, at Western Maryland College, Westminster, Maryland.

Notices of Chicago and Indiana Meetings on page 7.

New York Meeting

Time: May 7, 1949. Registration 2:30 P.M. Meeting 3 P.M.

Place: Elmira College, Elmira, New York, in the College Library.

Program: A Demonstration and Defence of the HISTORICAL and PHILOLOGICAL vs. the CRITICAL and SEMANTIC Presentation of a Special Piece of English Literature Commonly Taught to College Classes.

Protagonists:

HISTORICAL and PHILOLOGICAL—**R. C. Bald,** Cornell Univ.

CRITICAL and SEMANTIC—**M. H. Abrams,** Cornell Univ.

The Special Piece of English Literature:

Coleridge's "Dejection, An Ode."

Discussion to be led by **Miss Ruth Adams,** Univ. of Rochester.

Following the discussion, President and Mrs. W. S. A. Pott will be at home to those who have attended the meeting.

At 6:30 P.M., dinner will be served at the College. Registration and Dinner, $2.00. Prof. George M. Kahrl, Elmira College, President of the N. Y. Group, in charge of the meeting.

Appointment Bureau

A Reminder

The Appointment Bureau of CEA provides a means of communication between members of our profession who have positions open in their departments and members who desire to apply for positions.

If you need English teachers—let us know. If you are available for a position—register with us.

Annual Registration Fee—$3.00.

Address—College English Association, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn 10, New York.
Attention: Appointment Bureau.
Telephone—Gedney 4-6379.

NOTE: Mrs. Catherine Tully Ernst, the Secretary's colleague at Brooklyn College, has most kindly agreed to become his assistant both in editing the CRITIC, and in managing the Appointment Bureau. With her special attention, the Appointment Bureau will be able to give more efficient service to those who patronize it.

On The Wickedness Of Analysis

"I know, it was!" cried Tweedledum, beginning to stamp about wildly and tear his hair. "It's spoilt, of course!"

Lewis Carroll, who knew a great deal about the foibles of schoolboys and schoolmasters alike, might almost have been describing the antics of a student in "English 1" for whom a poem has been analyzed. "I shall never be able to read it with pleasure again, now that you have torn it apart and read all those meanings into it!" "Do we always **have** to find all those levels of meaning in everything? Can't we ever be allowed to **enjoy** even a simple little poem or story?" Surely these reproaches are familiar enough. But let us not imitate Tweedledee; even if the student laments his shattered poem as a nice new rattle broken, let us not at once fold ourselves up in our own umbrellas in guilt and confusion.

Not all objections to the analysis of poetry as a classroom technique can be shrugged off as merely the badge of the witless or indolent. Many good minds among the students—souls eminently worth saving—exhibit a hostility to any form of literary analysis. And no small number of our colleagues express in principle or in practice an active distrust of what some of them term scornfully "Brooks-and-Warrenism." "Appreciation" is the key word in most such objections. If one is to go on teaching literature with confidence, he must come to terms with the alleged conflict between **understanding** and **appreciation.** And if literature really cannot be taught, and must rather be imbibed, then those of us who would be discontented as mere bartenders serving up literary intoxicants without comment save for an occasional eloquent sigh, had best start looking for an honest job.

Perhaps objections to analysis as one of the essential methods of teaching poetry may be set down something as follows:

1. Analysis of a poem is unnecessary and futile; either one comprehends and appreciates a poem as he reads it, or he does not, and there's an end. Any attempted analysis is a mere exercise in ingenuity.
2. Analysis is an illegitimate

(Continued on Page 7)

THE CEA CRITIC

Published at 70 Main Street, Mineola, N. Y.

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Entered as second-class matter August 11, 1948, at the post office, at Mineola; New York, under the Act of August 24, 1912.

Published Monthly, September through May

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Membership in the College Englisih Association $2.00 a year, of which $1.50 is for subscription of the CEA CRITIC. Subscription for Libraries $1.50.

De Tocqueville, General Public Education, And "English"

After tracing the "great democratic revolution" leading to "equality of condition" from its origins in equal opportunities offered to all classes by the church, the law, and commerce, Alexis de Tocqueville* continues, "It is impossible not to consider every addition to science, every fresh truth, and every new idea as a germ of power placed within the reach of the people."

"The gradual development of the equality of conditions is therefore a providential fact, and it possesses all the characteristics of a Divine decree; it is universal, it is durable, it constantly eludes all human interference, and all events as well as all men contribute to its progress."

In this providential democratic society, distinguished by equality of condition, there is no class "in which the taste for intellectual pleasures is transmitted with hereditary fortune and leisure, and by which the labors of the intellect are held in honor." The people are sovereign, and "the principle of sovereignty of the people is neither barren or concealed, as it is with some other nations; it is recognized by the customs and proclaimed by the laws; it spreads freely, and arrives without impediment at its most remote consequences." Some of these consequences are "cultural", and are still decried by those who long for medieval grace. But these cultural consequences are integral with American society, and are inevitable.

The sovereign people "give largely to the community, and very sparingly to those who govern it. . . . The poor are maintained, immense sums are annually devoted to public instruction. . . . The advantage of democracy does not consist, therefore, in favoring the prosperity of all, but simply in contributing to the well-being of the greatest possible number."

Under these circumstances, "Not only will the number of those who can take an interest in the productions of the mind be enlarged, but the taste for intellectual enjoyment will descend, step by step, even to those who, in aristocratic societies, seem to have neither time nor ability to indulge in them. When hereditary wealth and the privileges of rank, and the prerogatives of birth have ceased to be, . . . it becomes evident that the chief cause of disparity between the fortunes of men is the mind. Whatever tends to invigorate, to extend, or to adorn the mind, instantly rises to great value. The utility of knowledge becomes singularly conspicuous even to the eyes of the multitude: those who have no taste for its charms set store upon its results, and make some efforts to acquire it . . ."

"As soon as the multitude begins to take an interest in the labors of the mind, it finds out that to excel in some of them is a powerful method of acquiring fame, power, or wealth. The restless ambition which equality begets instantly takes this direction as it does all others. The number of those who cultivate science, letters, and the arts becomes immense. The intellectual world starts into prodigious activity: every one endeavors to open for himself a path there, and to draw the eyes of the public after him. Something analogous occurs to what happens in society in the United States, politically considered. What is done is often imperfect, but the attempts are innumerable; and, although the results of individual effort are commonly very small, the total amount is always very large."

"In democracies it is by no means the case that all the men who cultivate literature have received literary education; and most of those who have some tinge of **belles-lettres** are either engaged in politics, or in a profession which only allows them to taste occasionally and by stealth the pleasures of the mind. These pleasures, therefore, do not constitute the principal charm of their lives; but are considered as a transient and necessary recreation amid the serious labors of life. Such men can never acquire a sufficiently intimate knowledge of the art of literature to appreciate its more delicate beauties; and the minor shades of expression must escape them. As the time they can devote to letters is very short, they seek to make the best use of the whole of it. They prefer books which may be easily procured, quickly read, and which require no learned research to be understood. They ask for beauties, self-proficient and easily enjoyed; above all, they must have what is unexpected and new. Accustomed to the struggle, the crosses, and the monotony of practical life, they require rapid emotions, startling passages — truths or errors brilliant enough to rouse them up, and to plunge them at once, as if by violence, into the midst of a subject. . . ."

"Taken as a whole, literature in democratic ages can never present, as it does in the periods of aristocracy, an aspect of order, regularity, and art; its form will, on the contrary, ordinarily be slighted, sometimes despised. Style will frequently be fantastic, incorrect, overburdened, and loose, almost always vehement and bold. . . . There will be more wit than erudition, more imagination than profundity, and literary performances will bear marks of an untutored and rude vigor of thought — frequently of great variety and singular fecundity."

"It is evident that in democratic communities the interest of individuals, as well as the security of the commonwealth, demands that the education of the greater number should be scientific, commercial, and industrial, rather than literary. Greek and Latin should not be taught in all schools; but it is important that those who by their natural disposition or their fortune are destined to cultivate letters or prepared to relish them, should find schools where true scholar may be formed."

Two ways lie open for thos who would make "English" a vi tal part of general public educa tion in democratic Americ whether in high school or in re quired college courses. One to set forth resolutely to rais public taste in the name of dis cipline, education, and cultur Insistence on this way has in spired a strong counter-move ment to make "English" into social study, that is, to abolish it And from that tendency, th sovereign people will not be dis suaded merely by powerful dia lectic in favor of cultural value The fate of classical studies ma be pondered, and the present at titude toward language study an alyzed.

The other way is to plan com position training and literar study so that they will have wid appeal and will be democratic i de Tocqueville's terms, even the students' prose style is no ideally polished and the human izing results of reading seem lim ited to our professional eyes. Fo general public education, ther seems little doubt that this se ond way is better calculated t produce "an all-pervading an restless activity, superabundan force, and an energy which inescapable from it, and whic may, under favorable circum stances, beget most amazing re sults."

For those students of speci interest and taste, who wis more, more should be readil available. And there will b more of these students if "Eng lish" is widely felt to be, n merely "cultural" or vague good, but a vital part of gener public education in democrat America. There is nothing the subject matter to prevent i becoming so.

* **Democracy in America,** ed. H. S. Commager, Oxford Press, World's Classics, Galaxy Edition. How many members know de Tocqueville's prediction about "the Russians and the Americans"? It makes Drew Pearson look myopic. pp. 242-3.

Committees Appointed

Report on the Ph.D.

W. Otto Birk, Colorad Charles M. Coffin, Kenyon; Rol ert T. Fitzhugh, Brooklyn, ex o ficio; Sanford Meech, Syracus Emery Neff, Columbia; W. Werner, Penn State.

Report on Teaching Load

W. E. Bowman, Duke: Aman Ellis, Colorado College, Chairma Maxwell H. Goldberg, Univ. Mass.; and one other to be a nounced later.

From a Member

Such ideals as those express in the editorial which Mr. Hoep ner denounces are what keep m in the teaching profession.

C. May Overton
Bucknell Universit

I'VE BEEN READING

Members are invited to contribute reviews of books, old or new, which they wish to call to the attention of other English teachers. Professor J. Gordon Eaker, the Associate Editor, is in charge of I'VE BEEN READING. He is Head, Department of English, Jersey City Junior College, Jersey City, N. J.

Comments on reviews will be welcomed.

America Through British Eyes. Compiled and Edited by Allan Nevins. Oxford University Press: New York, 1948. Pp. 530, $6.00.

Here are selections from the hundreds of books by British travelers to America, which give a panoramic view of American society, manners, and institutions from the time when independence was new to the period of the Second World War.

Dividing the travelers into five groups, Mr. Nevins introduced each group with a stimulating essay: (1) Utilitarian Inquiry, (2) Tory Condescension, (3) Unbiased Portraiture, (4) Analysis, and (5) Boom, Depression, and War. Certainly the youngest republic, in all, had much for which to be thankful in its earliest guests, "for John Bernard, Henry Wansey, John Melish, Henry Bradshaw Fearon, William Corbett, and Francis Hall were middle class and working men who sought information as to improving their condition." Their opinion, therefore, of the United States is kindly. As to the travelers of the second period ("the decade that we think of as a period of British abuse"), however, the United States was not so fortunate. Instead of men from the middle and working classes, there now come men and women from the upper and professional classes: Captain Basil Hall, Frances Trollope, Harriet Martineau, Fanny Kemble, Captain Frederick Marryat, Charles Dickens.

The third period represents an era of detached appraisal. It was now plain that the astonishing growth of the United States had passed beyond the rawness of youth, and the increasing wealth and power of the republic inspired a more respectful attitude in its visitors. This is reflected in the writings of James Silk Buckingham, Charles Lyell, Alexander Mackay, William Howard Russell, Edward Dicey, and Anthony Trollope. Following these come writers (David Macrae, Matthew Arnold, James Bryce, Henry W. Nevinson, **et al.**) who have produced some of the very best travel literature. "They didn't have to waste time debating whether democracy was a success or a failure, for the nation of Lincoln had ended that debate; they didn't have to worry about the excessive American susceptibility to praise or blame; they could assume that if not all Englishmen admired America nearly all of them respected her."

In the writings of the last period a let-down as to quality is noticeable. The identical, well-known subjects (city life, political graft, crime, food, universities, etc., etc.) are treated in much the same way, but not as interestingly.

America Through British Eyes, nonetheless, is a worthwhile book, if only as an index to the actual attitude of present-day Britishers toward the United States. Especially entertaining, it is also revealing as to where the United States has come from, where she's "on her way to," and why.

J. Randolph Fisher
Georgia State College

BULLETIN BOARD

Who — Where — What

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Georgia State College, Savannah, Georgia—New Aids: Reading Clinic; Audio-Visual Center.

From a Director

Who is T. C. Hoepfner and what is he that all our swans should praise him? Let me congratulate you (or the author, nameless) of "Even, And Particularly, Mr. Eliot." Did you read of the professor at Cambridge who, notified of Eliot's award, smiled tolerantly and said, "Do you really think Mr. Eliot has ever written a line which could be called poetry?" I'd like to rip apart his "What Is a Classic?" Have you read it? His "classic" figure is a prototype of Eliot, cold, critical, looking down its thin nose appraisingly or with lifted eyes to Heaven thanking itself it was classic and not as other men. Humorless, no sharing of fellowship or warmth!"

From a Member

Regarding your stand on Eliot, I have never been fooled as to his stature. Hollow critics, and there are many, tell us, of the Waste Land, that we must "bring a great deal to it." Indeed we must, for the veritable communication is not there, as even a relatively good background would denote. . .

As for your critics, Mr. Hoepfner sidesteps the issue. And Mr. Nethercot, whose letter I re-read, makes no positive contribution. Why do they not roll up their sleeves and write something really good for the CRITIC?

Name on Request.

From Mr. Nethercot

I await the results of my challenge with great interest. I wish, however, that you would assure my fellow teachers of composition that I do know how to spell "frustration" (You left that second "r" out **twice.** Fie on you—or your proof-reader!)

Alas, both. Editor.

Mammouth: A Correspondence

Dear Editor:

Please send me the address of the Mammouth Cave College.

Thank you.

C.E.A. Member

Dear Member:

Mammouth Cave College is in the Utopia School District of Laputa County, Kentucky. The post office is Swiftville. Any correspondence to Professor Huson will reach him more quickly, however, if addressed to him in care of the editor. The Editor

Prof. Herbert Huson
Mammouth College
Swiftville, Kentucky

Dear Prof. Huson:

I have read and re-read your article on Mammouth in the November issue of THE CEA CRITIC; consequently, there now follows a deep interest in the organization of your college. Do you publish a brochure or a catalog giving Mammouth's background, aims, purposes, objectives, courses offered, etc.?

The program for the course of study in Composition and Literature as outlined in the CRITIC is a real challenge to any instructor in this subject in any college. My own theories of the presentation of this subject dovetail with the manner and objectives as expressed in your article, so it has been with avid interest that I have read and re-read it and studied it.

Would it be presumptuous on my part to ask to borrow a Syllabus on your course, or for more detailed information about it?

C.E.A. Member

Recommended

Writing Texts

Story Writing
by Edith R. Mirrielees $3.00
A new edition of "The Story Writer," this is our most popular text, used in colleges throughout the country.

Characters Make Your Story
by Maren Elwood $3.50
A famous book on characterization, for classes in fiction.

Writing Non-Fiction
by Walter Campbell (Stanley Vestal) $3.00
A complete coverage of the non-fiction field.

The Writer's Handbook
edited by A. S. Burack $4.50
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THE TECHNIQUE OF RADIO WRITING

By Luther Weaver
University of Minnesota Extension

A distinctive text with a theory of writing for the ear — a method of developing the ability to write for the radio based on individual word selection. The student is taught to think in words, not in sentences. Especially emphasized is the importance of thinking in terms of the audience, of writing clearly without writing down. The beginning radio writer learns to deliberately weigh each word for clarity, sound, and meaning. The problems he should be aware of and overcome are explained, and examples are cited for study.

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Act of Piety?

In the December issue of THE CRITIC, Mr. A. E. Johnson takes me to task for implying that we should teach students to seek for esthetic and literary as well as for moral values in their reading. I included the question merely as illustration of the problems that beset the teacher of literature, but Mr. Johnson's objection prompts me to comment further upon the issue in order that my question may be taken, as I hoped it would be, for something more than the mere parroting of a cliche.

Last year, in a course in sophomore literature, I assigned a class paper on the ballad, "The Demon Lover," a paper which was done without previous preparation. Like most ballads, "The Demon Lover" is interesting for its structure and entirely alone; its values are entirely narrative values, and no one could claim for it any profound insight into the problems of human life. At least, this was my point of view before I read the papers which my students submitted. But to my surprise and amusement some of them solemnly asserted that the anonymous author was warning married women against the danger of renewing acquaintances with their former friends and lovers if these gentlemen should be impertinent enough to return. This attempt to make the naive other-worldliness of the ballad into a moral preachment is a perfect illustration of the implication which I intended in my question of last September. In other words, we should guard the student against the temptation to find moral absolutes where none were intended by the author. Who can object, and I certainly do not, to the discussion of moral and philosophical ideas when these are inherent in the literature itself? One could, I suppose, even make out a good case for the point of view that literature is in a very basic sense a dramatization of philosophical and moral assumptions. But a simple-minded search for ethical assertions, especially those which happen to fit one's private beliefs, is an act of piety, not of literary criticism or scholarship. The attitude implied by the previously mentioned misreading of "The Demon Lover" would reduce "My Last Duchess" to a sermon on the dangers of an hereditary aristocracy and turn "We Are Seven" into an advertisement for a firm of undertakers.

But a ballad is only a ballad; it is not an epic or a drama, or a great autobiographical poem, like **The Prelude.** A basic value in that poem is its inwardness, its sense of revelation. Is this inwardness "moral"? I do not see that anything is to be critically gained by calling it so. The moral approach can never reveal the vast complex of thought and feeling and concept that is to be found in **The Prelude.** Is the intensification of feeling that develops as a drama untolds a moral value, strictly speaking? Take away the moral issue from **Hamlet** and much remains even if a moral issue is central in the play. I am not, it must be observed, attacking the discussion of moral issues in literature as such, for since literature deals with characters in action, values of good and evil may be assigned to those actions. I do assert, however, that no one viewpoint can suffice adequately to explain or interpret literature.

In addition to the insufficiency of the moral approach as criticism, there is another disadvantage no less dangerous because it is unconscious. The moralist tends to reject those moral ideas which do not agree with his own ethical assumptions. As a human being he needs those assumptions, but not necessarily as a teacher. I have always believed it the function of the teacher of literature to find first what the authors were communicating to the reader and then to set this communication against whatever background of critical, biographical, or historical fact will make it significant In this process the discussion of ethical ideas has an important, but not a unique, value.

Paul E. Reynolds
Rhode Island State College

Toward Enjoyable Writing and Reading

Now and again every instructor feels that the teaching of composition can best be carried on without a textbook. "Let the students learn by writing," he says to himself, and heroically he scribbles a few handbook rules over and over again upon his students' themes, or he lectures about essential facts of grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics, and rhetoric.

Almost everyone of us, it appears from talk at conventions, sooner or later decides that the noble doubt about the efficacy of textbooks is resolved by the repeated questions about technicalities from best students. These A students, whose time we did not wish to waste on seventh-grade fundamentals, turn out to be the very persons whose eagerness for details makes the use of a textbook imperative. Their wish is not grammar for literacy but grammar and rhetoric for richer self-expression and enjoyable reading.

The fact seems to be that the poorest students cannot get along without a textbook, the middling students do better with a textbook, and the very best students eagerly study a wisely assigned textbook. Most students, if advised as to its usefulness, will want to keep as a permanent deskbook an excellent guide to sage and composition. How many an older colleague, in departments other than English, speaks reverently of Woolley and its favored place on the reference shelf.

The newer books go beyond the old Woolley. Grammar as an isolated science, a set of tricks well learned through hundreds of unrelated exercises, has given way to a study of language in action. Idiomatic expression in the normal everyday speech and writing of professional men now is examined and practiced. Involved Miltonic or Macaulayan sentences only occasionally are parsed, and then for the sake of supplying perspective on the superiority of the short sentence.

Involved, abstract essays by Arnold and Newman seldom are composition models today. **Life, The New Yorker,** trade and professional papers, and the newspaper seem to be yielding better examples of prose style for study. This change has come about through a recognition of the importance of immediacy of interest and naturalness of expression to the vast majority of students who are engaged in pre-professional study. An engineering student does better with "Engineering News-Record" or a similar paper than with "The Atlantic", and an agriculture student does better with a farm journal. However much one decries the demand for immediacy, the fact is worth reckoning with.

At no point does the English teacher have a greater opportunity to give perspective to the principle of immediacy than in Freshman Composition. By explaining current usage and then by adding something of the history and laws of language, a teacher can help students discriminate between simple, factual, and direct expository writing on one hand and imaginative writing on the other. For this purpose a good newspaper can be a valuable aid.

Possibly 90 per cent of American college graduates' reading outside professional areas is in the newspaper. At least 99 per cent of college graduates' composition in letters, business reports, and speeches is in plain factual prose. Almost every city newspaper has a letters column, a business page containing reports, and every now and again a large portion or the full text of a speech. Here is a good place to begin. Here is the spot where the st dents hope to find their nam and writings. Here can be studi what is good and less than go in fundamentals, in senten structure, grammar, paragrap ing, and rhetorical developme

But a teacher should not st after a lesson or two on the new paper. There are about 7,5 trade and professional pape wherein the students also so day hope to find their writin or ideas useful to them. The journals deserve sympathetic e amination and analysis by En lish teachers, for almost all st dents sooner or later will be su scribers and possibly contrib tors of book reviews, essays, personal notes. More colle graduates than often is realiz become associated with industri and association house orga And seldom recognized is the a tonishly high quality of some them; Ford, Standard Oil, a other firms issue house orga little below the standard of t popular "slick" magazines.

The "slick" magazines li "Holiday," "The New Yorke and the popular general weekli and monthlies printed on glos paper have created vast audie ces because of the immediacy appeal. In some of these, "T Saturday Evening Post," "C lier's," and others, the gamut the literary forms is run, a here a teacher can find imagin tive literature — short storie verse, history, novels in serializ doses, and essays both factual a argumentative.

Less likely to be immediate appealing are the Class A mag z i n e s, "Atlantic," "Harper's "American Scholar," and oth "think" magazines. The sho stories frequently win prizes contests, and the poetry is u formly of high quality. The a ticles are authoritative. T whole of these magazines is d signed to be permanently usef in molding social, literary, a scientific opinion. In these ma azines the test of permanence c be applied to materials often a vertised as of immediate inte est. I would not frown upon t use, with selected freshm groups, of any of these quali magazines. But I do think th C and D students, especially the pre-professional groups, a seldom prepared for this type reading.

Preliminary to the requir ment for the study of the bet magazines, and the classics us ally anthologized for freshm there should be a requirement a thorough study of a handbo of contemporary grammatical a rhetorical usage. Contempora idiom and sentence structu must be understood in terms

contemporary structural patterns like the news article, the editorial, the letter, the biographical essay, and the argumentative essay (together with a minimum of matter on fallacious and logical reasoning).

After a thorough grounding in factual writing, students should be introduced to imaginative or artistic expression and to the writings of permanent value. Let a student master the writing of the fundamental forms of factual expression he will use in everyday business and professional life, and he will be ready to ascend to the imaginative level.

There is no job quite so heartbreaking as that which involves taking students through materials too far above them. It has become increasingly the English teacher's responsibility to accept his students at the level he finds them, not where supposedly they ought to be, and then to help them step up the ladder of ability to write and to read that higher order of composition which is called literary. Fundamental in this process is the use of a basic textbook which inculcates these principles and which can serve as a permanently useful deskbook guide.

Harry R. Warfel
University of Florida

Another Place for Grammar

Nowhere has the phenomenon dubbed by sociologists "the cultural lag" been more evident than in education; and nowhere in education has this lag been more conspicuous than in the unreasoning efforts of grammarians to perpetuate their functionless discipline in college freshman English courses.

Fresh evidence of the stubborn, rear-guard action fought by the traditionalists appeared in the December, 1948, issue of THE CRITIC, wherein was printed the contents of a paper by Bertha M. Watts read at the Indiana meeting of the CEA, at the Uinversity of Notre Dame, May 1, 1948.

This paper is a typical product of the "we view with alarm" school. Miss Watts concedes, with genteel humor, the brutal fact that freshman composition courses are notoriously poor. But she fears that progressive educators in their eagerness to correct the situation are going too far. To employ her own metaphor, she deplores the fact that the educational surgeons have elected to operate on the patient and remove a vestigial remnant — grammar. Miss Watts feels that grammar, like the cat in THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, is "a harmless, necessary thing," not the malignant cancer the surgeons took it to be. Her plea will bear examination.

Admitting the need for a more functional approach to the teaching of composition, and conceding that the approach now generally labeled Communication serves a useful purpose "as a necessary tool in the democratic way of life," Miss Watts argues that precisely such a program increases, does not diminish, the need for emphasizing grammar. Her method of arguing her case is itself ample evidence of the need for a course in Communication which will instill some respect for the principles of elementary logic.

To begin with, her entire argument is an extended example of question begging. She enumerates throughout her paper educational ends or goals with which no one will disagree and then triumphantly leaps to the conclusion that the study of grammar is the best possible means of insuring these ends. Nowhere is there a careful examination of the relationship of means to ends. One example must suffice. Miss Watts writes, "What (the college freshman) needs . . . is a practical linguistic knowledge that will give him . . . freedom from his language inhibitions, impeding habits of locution, **and bondage to dogmatic texts and teachers;** (my **bold face**) and freedom for developing, under democratic guidance, a linguistic intelligence which will enable him . . . to make use of the rich resources of anguage in serving worthy ends." She then summarily concludes that, "Grammar, rightly taught, will help him to gain these freedoms." This kind of argument clearly gets to nowhere since it assumes the very matter in dispute.

Just as serious is an example of a failure to define her terms. In paragraph six of her paper we find the following implied syllogism:

Communication "for high purposes" requires skill in "combining, subordinating, and general ordering . . . of word groups."

"Grammar focuses . . . attention on the way . . . groups of words are joined and ordered in the communication of thought."

Therefore, communication "for high purposes" requires the study of grammar.

This seemingly plausible syllogism breaks down when we look for the meaning of the middle term — word groups. Proponents of the Communication approach would be able to accept the major premise if "word groups" were understood to mean **ideas** expressed in words. They could not accept it if this phrase means —what Miss Watts clearly thinks it means—parts of speech, bearing the abstract labels, nouns, prepositional phrases, infinitives, etc. That is, they would not agree that the systematic study of these grammatical abstractions results in any measurable improvement in the student's ability to think and write straight.

By failing to distinguish between the only connotation of this phrase that would make the major premise acceptable to non-traditionalists, and the narrow grammatical connotation unacceptable to them, the writer has passed off as logical a spurious bit of reasoning. This sort of thinking is in the same category as that reflected in the following syllogism:

A chicken is an eggplant.
An eggplant is a vegetable.
Therefore, a chicken is a vegetable.

By means of this word magic, anything can be "proved."

Further lapses of this kind can be detected in almost every paragraph of the paper. But it is not my purpose here to embarrass Miss Watts. Rather it is my purpose to reveal the inadequacy of the grammar approach to solve the basic problem of communication — how to transfer an idea from one person to another without serious misunderstanding. Miss Watts' knowledge of grammar has not saved her. How could it?

The available evidence — and it presents itself afresh every day —points to the inevitable conclusion that there is no "transfer" from the study of grammar to the ability to think straight. Whereas, there is ample evidence at hand, for all who will earnestly try the experiment, that a course in straight thinking will result in perceptible improvement in the student's ability to write simple, clear, and direct prose. And that is all any honest freshman composition teacher even hopes for.

I cannot conclude without reference to Miss Watts' statement rightly deploring the role in which the English teacher has been cast by society — that of guardian of a mythical perfection of language. I would only ask Miss Watts to consider if it is not this very sacred cow — grammar — to whose defense she rises that is chiefly responsible for this unhappy state of affairs. Is it not his fanatical emphasis on formal grammar that has given the English teacher the schoolmarm brand, that has led society — including our academic colleagues — to identify English teachers as a sort of linguistic Gestapo eavesdropping for a split infinitive?

Despite the fact, easily established by first-hand observation, that English teachers are very frequently among the best-read and best-informed members of a college faculty, they are regarded by people who do not even know them as fuddy-duddies. At best they are relegated to the paradoxical position of a tribal totem, something curiously exalted, removed, and a little unreal, a petty deity to whom lip service is ceremoniously but uneasily paid on special occasions

(Continued on Page 6)

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but who is ignored by intelligent people most of the time. This is surely an unpleasant fate. But are we seeking to remove the cause of this stigma? What is more responsible than this "harmless, necessary cat," grammar? And why must it have so many lives?

William G. Leary
California State
Polytechnic College
San Luis Obispo, California

College English and Teacher Training

The men in most college English departments are, when they stop to think about it, dissatisfied with the way prospective teachers of high-school English are instructed in how to teach their subject by someone whose chief interest is not English but Education. Over a period of years the educationists have so changed the secondary-school courses of study that little of the work required of a college student majoring in English remains very closely related with the work that the student will be called upon to do if he becomes a high-school English teacher. It is true that the chief function of the high-school is not the preparation of students for college, and it is equally true that the chief function of college English departments is not the preparation of high-school teachers. However, secondary schools and colleges cannot afford to ignore each other completely. Like nations, they cannot reasonably expect to exist in splendid isolation. A student who comes to college with a poor preparation in high school is likely to return as a poorly prepared teacher, only to send on others even more poorly prepared than himself. Those who advocate complete independence on both levels are simply ignoring this fact.

Our department, along with many others, has often deplored this situation. About all that most English departments do is to encourage or discourage those students who seem likely to make good or bad teachers. Nor are English departments alone in this attitude. Few academic departments take an active part in what is generally called professional preparation. Informally, our department has thought for some time that it should, but we have not actively sought to participate. Recently, however, a state-wide survey resulted in a decision to revise the special-methods offerings of the Education department of our school. The Education department invited the academic departments concerned to assist in planning the revised offerings. The resulting conference produced some ideas which I believe worth while and which give the academic departments, including English, some valuable control over the selection and training of secondary teachers. The most significant recommendations are that the instructor of the special-methods course should be a regular member of the academic department, teaching other courses in the department, and that the academic department should set its own requirements for admission to the course.

More specifically, it was suggested that the individual selected to teach the course have at least a master's degree in the subject matter field and an undergraduate minor in education, together with some teaching experience on both high-school and college levels. I believe it can safely be assumed that such a person will, through experience, know wherein high-school students are deficient and what difficulties stand in the way of the high-school teacher who sincerely tries to do something about such deficiencies.

Althougt it was not part of the recommendation, administrative experience in the secondary school would be helpful. I have known administrators to stay with inferior text books and to furnish the library with virtually useless books in order to save a few dollars. In my own experience as a principal, I have had to enlist the aid of the superintendent and board of education to enforce my decision not to sign diplomas for some students who, because previous classes had not had to, thought they should not have to write any papers. With solid administrative support, I was able to get good work from this class, but a teacher without support could not have done so.

I have also known administrators who judged their teachers primarily on the results of standardized literature tests, with the result that the teachers were content to teach the test rather than look for material which might have been more significant in the particular situation.

The prospective teacher should be prepared to cope with problems like the above. Only the academically trained will consider some of them important, and only the experienced can anticipate them.

Our other recommendation — that the department concerned set its own standards for admission to the methods course—is, I think, even more important. Most states require such courses, but few require any grade average or recommendation from the academic department for certification in a subject. Thus it has been possible for our poorest students to win certification. Now the poor student can be effectively discouraged by being denied admission to the methods course on the grounds of poor work in the academic department.

The net result of our program cannot, of course, be definitely determined for some time, but it should bring forth a group of teachers who have a better-than-average sense of the importance of their subject and who are well prepared to set forth a valuable program, push it through, and demonstrate its worth.

Minor W. Major
New Mexico Highlands Univ.

LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES: VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Shall my son be
A plain smith like me?
Or a bowyer, boyer, bower,
Fletcher or flower?
Arblasters get a lot of prestige
In times of seige,
But it's safer being a coward, stoddard, shepherd or a Verderer
(Only you'd have to be smart
To deal with crimes like **assart**
In the swainmote).
Many a man of note
Has started life as a hawker, walker,
Even a corker,
But you might meet a nicer
Class as a spicer,
And you don't run into so many foreigners
Among warners and warriners.
The world is already too full of fewsters, brewsters,
Butlers and cutlers,
And I think I'd sooner
He weren't a spooner.
But what about a massinger, pargiter, bloomer, ashburner,
A hopper, a leaper, a turner,
A pinner, poynder, pender,
Spinner or spender?
Or of course a
Chaucer?

Joyce Horner
Mount Holyoke College

Practice Teaching By Graduate Students

Mr. Thomas Marshall, in "Nobody Ever Told Him", has certainly attacked a major issue. His points are admirable and well taken. The difficulty is, however, that, like grandfather's clock, he stopped short. Why is it that "... we (should not) let the Educators step in . . ."? Could they not be used in a consultative capacity concerning methods and techniques? Surely the professor of Education realizes that his province is not one of the subject matter of English and that this is the domain of the professor of English. Certainly, too, the English specialist must recognize his own limitations.

Bearing in mind that student-teaching if effectively employed has for many years been considered highly advantageous in the preparation of public school teachers, why should we not give those persons who will instruct in higher education **actual training** in teaching? In many instances, this could be done within the walls of the university and under the joint auspices of the departments of English and Education. In this manner aims and objectives, principles and methods of effective teaching, and tools of measurement and evaluation could be learned concretely, and both English and Education specialists could oversee the program. Also the two departments might jointly sponsor a seminar on teaching problems.

Furthermore, the graduate student would not only teach under effective guidance, being also aided by the regular teacher of the course in which he practices, but he would discover whether he **really** wanted to teach undergraduates. Should he learn that teaching is not for him early enough in his career, he could turn to other pursuits before he contributed to further inadequate teaching on the college level.

Finally, joint cooperation between these two departments in the matter of teacher-training would strengthen the institution by combatting over-department-

alism and by furthering growth on the part of the faculty members participating. Who knows, the movement might even spread to other departments within the university. Chester S. Williams
Arizona State College, Flagstaff

Cornell Does It

To counteract the widespread assertion that many holders of Doctor of Philosophy degrees go into teaching with little previous teaching experience, Cornell University will introduce next fall a seminar on college teaching for doctoral candidates. The course, to be given by the School of Education, will focus attention on the principles and techniques of teaching and learning. — N. Y. Times, March 6, 1949.

Credit (Late) Where Due

Dear Editor:

May I meddle? In THE CRITIC's account of the regional meeting in Cambridge in November, the mention of the Program Committee, omitted the names of that committee. That may have been an oversight, or it may have been due, as I can well understand, to space limitations. But among the people I encountered, that day, there was a good deal of grateful comment on the excellent content of the program, and the skill with which it was administered. It occurs to me that a naming of the personnel of the committee, in the next issue, possibly, would be well received all around.

Is that reasonable, and possible? Cordially,
DAVID MORTON

Both possible and reasonable, and richly deserved. The Program Committee for the New England meeting of last November was Morse Allen, Trinity College; Franklin Norvish, Northeastern University; and Maxwell H. Goldberg, Chairman, University of Massachusetts. The Director of the Press Bureau at Northeastern was most cordial and helpful to the committee. The report sent the Editor omitted mentioning the contribution of Lee Wilson, Rhode Island State College, to the World's Classics discussion.

On the Wickedness of Analysis

(Continued from Page 1)

perversion of the poem, inevitably reading into it meanings that the poet never intended, and that no one but an English instructor would ever have thought of.

3. Analysis is an insurmountable bar to appreciation; it spoils the poem for the individual reader, perhaps forever.

4. Poems are intended for the delectation of the palate and the elevation of the spirit, and not for the nourishment of the body. Therefore they must, like oysters, be swallowed whole. Rumination is unseemly.

It seems to me that several fallacies underlie these objections to analysis. One is that assimilation of a poem is not at all, or not primarily, or not significantly, an intellectual experience, but something entirely distinguished from and opposed to it—i.e., an emotional experience. A corollary is the convenient belief that most poems are really simple and direct, and that complexities where they exist at all, may be ignored without serious loss. Another fallacy is the narrow notion of analysis as necessarily a mere fragmentation and dissection, unattended by generalization, synthesis, or reconstruction. And a third is the assumption that poetry has nothing to do with life, beyond offering a transitory pleasure which withdraws us for the moment from life.

In discrediting these assumptions, and thus answering the objections to which they give rise it seems important first to establish or to assume something definite about what a poem really is. A poem is not merely an arrangement of black and white upon a page, or a series of vibrations in air, or merely a set of predetermined and calculated relationships among words and aggregates of words. Since words have not only physical appearance and sound, but signification I think we are compelled to consider them in terms of meaning. If the perception of a poem were merely a matter of sensation, then we should properly seize the electrodes and give ourselves over to the titillation.

Further, while the distinctions between emotion and judgment, the pathetic faculties and reason, feeling and understanding, are often valid and useful, I am skeptical about the divorce of mood from meaning in a poem. I do not see how its mood can be construed as other than a part of the total meaning of a poem. Still, those who insist upon the distinction have their texts. "A poem should not mean, but be!", they crow as though that settled the matter. Nevertheles, when pressed, they are not always able to say precisely what they mean by **being** as opposed to **meaning**. Indeed, they may be forced to the grudging admission that MacLeish's figure may suggest only that a poem is in some essentials untranslatable; that it says what it says, and not something else, and that it is what it is, uniquely and without equivalent.

Some who feel that a poem must literally be taken as a whole, and not viewed at any time as a relationship of parts, quote piously

"A poem should be palpable
and mute
As a globed fruit."

Let me follow their example and degrade the metaphor still further. Would the proponents of appreciation as opposed to understanding so insist upon preservation of the inviolability of the whole as to deny us a look at the inside of our grapefruit? Must we merely turn it delicately in our hands, contemplating its navel?

Some of the objections to analysis of metaphor as a classroom technique seem to arise from undisciplined metaphorical thinking—precisely the kind of thinking that needs to be subjected to the rigors of such analysis. For however like them they may be, poems are after all **not** globed fruits, or butterflies, or oysters, or cadavers, or gillyflowers. Neither are they literally "wordless as the flight of birds," no matter what they **should** be. Poems consist if not exclusively, at least importantly, in meanings which are somehow captured and fixed in certain arrangements of words and phrases.

Let it be admitted, nay, asserted, at once that in good poetry the whole is always in a sense more than the sum of its parts: indeed, much more nearly the product. All the meanings modify one another, but where is the wickedness in looking first at individual meanings by themselves and then in increasingly complicated and subtle relationships with other meanings in the poem? Surely an analysis which is only a fragmentation or dissection, and leaves the pieces strewn untidily about, is indefensible as a

Indiana Meeting

Time: May 13, 14, 1949.
Place: Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.
Program: Friday, May 13—Panel devoted to literature.
After dinner speaker Friday evening, Mark Van Doren.
Saturday, May 14 — Panel on teaching.
In charge: John R. Bloxome, President Indiana CEA, Rose Polytechnic Institute, Terre Haute.
George S. Wykoff. Vice President, Indiana CEA, and Richard Crowder, both of Purdue; and Vila Deubach, Secretary, Anderson College.

Chicago Meeting

Time: Saturday, April 30, 1949.
Place: Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago.
General Topic: Teaching Literature. Sub-topics: Teaching the Novel, Research and Teaching, Publishing Anthologies, Literary Criticism.
Principal Speakers: E. K. Brown, Univ. of Chicago.
H. P. Vincent, Ill. Inst. of Tech.

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classroom technique. But such perversion of an extremely useful way of approaching poetry is not a fault inherent in the approach.

By the extended analysis of rich metaphors in selected poems, the student's responsiveness to other metaphors can be sharpened, and his imagination schooled and disciplined. It would be folly to ignore historical background and the climate of opinion in which the poem was first conceived. The biographical approach is almost always valuable. Metrical effects operate to modify meaning as well as to delight the ear, and cannot be ignored. The only check that need be invoked is the rule of proportion. The teacher cannot be all things to all men, but he can cultivate perspective and sense as well as sensibility.

But perhaps we have slighted the claims of appreciation as an alternative approach. There remain to be answered the critics who insist that the end of any reading of poetry should be appreciation, and who sometimes assert that analysis either affords nothing in that direction, or actually precludes and destroys appreciation.

It is constantly proposed that students be allowed, and enabled, to **appreciate** the poem directly, and spared the laborious and difficult process of arriving at an understanding of the poem. But is not appreciation in this context a slippery concept? It may mean what it does to Leo Stein in his **Appreciation: Painting, Poetry, and Prose** (Crown Publishers, N. Y., 1947).

"Poetry is not something to translate into something else; it is something to be read and reread till it revals its secrets. It is better to read one poem ten times than to read ten poems once. All that should be done in aid is to find out the meanings of unknown words and the sense of unknown allusions; the rest should come from acquaintance with the text."

But I am puzzled as to the precise manner in which a poem "reveals its secrets". Insofar as Mr. Stein is merely insisting that if one takes a poem apart to look at its components, he must put it back together again, and look at the whole with a new and fuller understanding, then I am with him. But when he suggests that the process of tenfold rereading which alone can reveal the secrets of a poem is a process wholly apart from and superior to analysis of the structure of meanings which makes up the poem, I must demur. What happens between the first and the tenth reading to make the poem come clear? What happens in consequence of "intimate acquaintance with the text," if not the perception of new relationships, new suggestions and implications, some to be accepted and some rejected, until the poetic meaning of the whole is established or apprehended? How does this differ from the kind of analysis practiced by Brooks and Warren?

I have often heard it said that the ideal way, and perhaps the only way, to teach poetry is to read it well aloud. But though it must certainly be allowed as a **part** of the ideal classroom technique, I have certain doubts of its validity and efficacy as a sole and unsupported mode of presentation. For one thing, an appreciable number of our able colleagues and a surprising number of practicing poets are demonstrably limited in their abilities to read well aloud. And secondly, I wonder how far even our most gifted poets and professors can be trusted to present in oral reading alone the poem, the whole poem, and nothing but the poem?

Two instances spring to my mind. In one, an evening lecture on Robert Burns was being delivered at a large university by a distinguished visiting scholar. The speaker was erect, silver haired, and stately: it was known that he had come to the auditorium directly from a cocktail party which had left some of the local notables bemused, but he was visibly unaffected. The first part of his discourse was vigorous and full of wry Scots humor; the atmosphere was warm and receptive. Presently, in the course of illustrative readings, the speaker chose, as it seemed on impulse, to render **John Anderson, my jo.** The briefest of glances at his handsome, white-haired lady seated modestly at one side of the auditorium, established a sudden and electric awareness. As the words flowed on, many an eye, including my own, moistened. After the final words of the last stanza:

"Now we maun totter down,
John.
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the
foot,
John Anderson my jo."

There was an eloquent pause. Then in a controlled voice: "Is that great poetry, or is it not?"

I happen to think that the poem is **not great.** But for the moment, at least, it had acquired a new dimension. Read thus by a manly man, a sophisticated scholar, unashamedly close to tears, it was overwhelmingly effective. The fact that it was consummate showmanship in no way discredited the genuineness of the emotion evident in audience and speaker alike. But it was criticism of an appreciative kind, and not an evaluative kind; the proper question was not "Is this not a great poem?" but "Does this not, under these circumstances move you?" I think the distinction is a real one.

The second instance is a recent experience of hearing T. S. Eliot read some of his own poetry most excellently well. Improvidently I attended without benefit of book, and a good deal of the time, despite the most attentive and concentrated listening, I found myself quite lost. When I peered covertly at my neighbor's page, the visual aid allowed me to see relationships I would otherwise have missed, but I was still acutely aware of falling short of full apprehension of the poems being read. In prefacing his rendition of a passage from **The Wasteland,** Mr. Eliot merely remarked, "I used to have some remarks I made at this point, but now there are so many people who know more about **The Wasteland** than I do, I have become more modest." The audience laughed delightedly, for was this not a telling thrust at the overweaning critics who set themselves up as authorities on things no one could possibly know so well as the author? However, in one important sense this was no joke. The images in the poem are not unrelated, but very subtly related, and it is **not** at all unlikely that critics like **F. O.** Matthiessen may perceive more clearly and be able to expound more lucidly than the poet himself certain pieces of relevant information about these relationships. And in listening to the poet read, I felt very keenly the lack of certain essential information which is available outside the poem in the form of notes and comments.

I submit, then, that a poem of any depth is most unlikely to be translated, **directly, entirely,** and **truly** into the mind and heart merely by being read aloud, however well. Moreover, I am not at all certain that appreciation can be taught directly in the classroom; I wonder if it does not ordinarily come as a by-product, albeit an earnestly sought by-product, of teaching other things.

Perhaps an approach to the teaching of poetry through analysis of metaphor, even when buttressed by attention to literary and cultural context, is not the way, the truth, and the light. But I am certain that the pant and palpitation method is either beyond or beneath most of us. Let us not give over a difficult and demanding task in favor of pretending to accomplish an impossible one, i.e., the schooling of students to **appreciate** poetry without **comprehending** it. Let the anti-intellectualist trouble deaf heaven with his bootless cries, but let us not be persuaded by the mere volume of the noise that a vaguely pleasurable feeling is the sole end of the reading of poetry.

Bruce Dearing
Swarthmore College